Equality and Human Rights Commission

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Minutes of the special meeting of the Board of the EHRC on Friday 4 April 2025

Friday 4 April 2025 (17:00 – 18:00)
Online via Microsoft Teams

In attendance

Commissioners

Kishwer Falkner (Chairwoman), Alasdair Henderson, Kunle Olulode, Martyn Jones, Akua Reindorf, John Kirkpatrick (Chief Executive)

Officers

Penny Hobman, Deputy Chief Executive
Moya Alcock, Director of Communications
Cihan Altan, Chief of Staff
Stephen Lodge, Senior Principal – Litigation
Neil Moloney, Principal – Lawyer
Adam Sowerbutts, Director of Legal

Miriam Bookman, Private Secretary
Ruth Latusek, Board Secretary

1. Chairwoman's introduction and apologies

1.1 The Chairwoman welcomed attendees to the special Board meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from the Deputy Chair and Commissioners Cash and Richards.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest or any existing interests relating to items on the agenda.

3. Statutory Code of Practice on Services, Public Services and Associations and Letter to the Minister for Women and Equalities

3.1 The Board approved the draft Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations ("the Code") subject to minor amendments and clarifications.

3.2 The Chairwoman assured Commissioners that she and the Chief Executive have considered the potential impact of the forthcoming judgment of the For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers Supreme Court case. The Board agreed to provide the updated draft Code to the Minister now and, once the judgment has been handed down, to review whether amendments to the draft Code are required before it is laid in Parliament.

3.3 The Board approved the draft letter to the Minister for Women and Equalities.

3.4 The Board agreed for the letter and the draft Code to be sent to the Minister for Women and Equalities before the Easter Recess.

Action: Send the letter and the Code to the Minister for Women and Equalities by Tuesday 8 April 2025.

3.5 The Board agreed to review the equality impact assessment, which can now be completed in relation to an agreed draft, when it is completed.

Action: Share the equality impact assessment with Commissioners to review and approve by correspondence or at the May Board meeting depending on when it is completed.

3.6 The Chairwoman advised that it is important to review and update major documents like the Code on a regular basis. She noted that by the time this Code has statutory status, it will have been more than 15 years since the last one was drafted. She asked that the Executive put in place a regular timetable for updating the various codes as that is core to retaining confidence in Equality law. A thorough review can take several years so it is critical that this is foreseen and resources allocated with predictability.

3.7 The Chairwoman, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Legal and the team for this significant piece of work. She thanked remitted Commissioners for their time and expertise.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 With no other business, the Chairwoman closed the meeting.